

In Loving Memory

Dr. Satish Chandra

May 6, 1927–July 18, 2019

Arun Chandra

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Dr. Satish Chandra was born on May 6, 1927, in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, India. He received his B.Sc. (Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics) in 1947, and M.Sc. in Physics in 1949, from Allahabad University. He started working on his Ph.D. in x-ray crystallography the same year. In 1950, he was appointed Lecturer in Physics at Allahabad University, and taught there until 1955. In 1953, he was married to Shimmi, and in 1954, the first of their three children (Arun) was born. In 1955, he went to the University of Toronto, Canada, for his Ph.D. in Physics, receiving it in 1957. In Toronto, he became known as an expert on the electron microscope, a new instrument at

that time. Consequently, in 1958 he was asked by the Sloan Kettering Memorial Cancer Institute (see: www.mskcc.org) to help them set up an electron microscope lab. Thus, he moved with his family to New York City in 1958. This move, and the consequent research opportunities, allowed my Dad to shift his research passions from pure physics to biophysics and cancer research, and he remained in these fields for the rest of his professional life. He was passionate about his research work, and my Mom has spoken how he would go to work all day, come back home for dinner (across from the Institute on 68th street), then go back to the lab, where he would work until late at night. His second child (Piyush) was born in New York City in 1959. In 1961, my Dad started work in the Pathology department of the University of Buffalo, as a Research Professor. In addition to his scientific work, he helped start the Indian Students Association there, and was its first President. He was active in the social world of young Indian students, helping organize activities, dances, and other festival events.

In 1963, his third child (Arti) was born. In the same year, the family moved back to India; they went on a cargo ship, taking about three weeks to travel from New York City to Bombay, India, via the Mediterranean and the 10-year-old Suez Canal. Arriving in India, to the celebration of his family there, he was the first professor of Biophysics at the Post-Graduate Institute for Medical Research of Punjab University — a brand-new University in a brand-new city, Chandigarh, that had been established only three years previously. Unfortunately, because the city and the University were brand-new, my Dad was not able to do the research he was passionate about. Instead, he was expected to be an administrator, and create the as-yet non-existent lab. So, his years were spent applying for funds, trying to buy equipment, and all the other activities related to establishing a lab. But his reputation as a young scientist doing interesting work remained, as he had published a number of papers on leukemia.

In 1965, my Dad accepted a research position with the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer. He moved with his family back to the United States in 1966, and started work for Pfizer as a Research Scientist in Maywood, New Jersey. In 1970, Pfizer decided to close those labs, and rather than relocate to a different lab, my Dad decided to move with his family to Chicago, and continue his research work at the Mercy Hospital.

During the Nixon/Ford administrations in the early 1970s, many government research funding agencies were cut, and unfortunately, my Dad's lab was one of them; it was closed down, rather suddenly, in 1975. This resulted in his moving to the Edward Hines Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital. He stayed there for the rest of his professional life, shifting from his research in leukemia to research in hypothermia as a tool for fighting cancer. This work led to an Award, in 1982, with a lecture tour of India, sponsored by UNESCO, introducing his work to a wide constituency in his home country. He continued publishing and presenting his research at national and international conferences on cancer research for the rest of his career, and retired in 1997.

In 1990, my Dad established the NETIP organization (Network of Indian Professionals), to encourage young adults to network and help each other in their professional lives. This organization grew from a group of twelve people who met in my Dad's living room to having over 50,000 members and 24 chapters in North America. NETIP invited my Dad to give a keynote address at their national conference in 2007.

Outside of his professional life, my Dad's passions centered around his family and his friends. He loved gardening, and both at our homes in Paramus, New Jersey and Flossmoor, Illinois, he would come home from work, and immediately go out and work in his garden, growing many different vegetables. He enjoyed his retirement, making visits to his now far-flung family, touring Mexico, the Virgin Islands and Switzerland with my Mom and other friends and relatives, and made numerous visits to India. He loved being a grandfather, and he adored his six grandchildren. My kids are lucky to have a grandfather like my Dad.

— Arun Chandra

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go — yet turning, stay.
Remember me when no more, day by day,
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

— Christina Rossetti

If you shed tears when you miss the sun,
you also miss the stars.

— Rabindranath Tagore